



Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 23 Number 4 April 2026

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, April 5, 2026, 6.15AM: Kistareddypet Lake, Hyderabad. Meeting Point(s): SVM Grand, Miyapur, 05:20AM; BHEL Bus Stop, Lingampally, 05:45AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Gurukumar KR (Mobile: 96188-27407)

Kistareddypet Lake, located near Patancheru, has recently caught the attention of birders. The lake is home to more than 110 species of birds, including large flocks of Little Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Black-tailed Godwit, Garganey, Gadwall etc. One can also spot Ruff, Spot-billed Pelican, Common Snipe, Greater Flamingo, Common Redshank, Temminck's Stint and other shore birds. The surrounding areas also host species like Mongolian Short-toed Lark, Citrine Wagtail, Baya Weaver, Indian Golden Oriole etc. This is a great opportunity to observe and record the diversity of migratory waterbirds and shore birds in this important habitat as winter draws to a close in the state.

This will be a half-day trip, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

AN IMPROMPTU VISIT TO PALMAKOLE LAKE
Trip Report: Palmakole Lake, Hyderabad, February 17, 2026

Shafaat Ulla

It was ages since we had been to the Palmakole Lake, so we (Nandu, Surekha, Chaudhari & self) decided to pay a visit and put in some birding there. When we reached the village of Palmakole (about 10km past the airport on Bengaluru highway) at about 07.00AM, we could not locate the turn off point to the lake as all our known landmarks had been obliterated because of road widening. However a kindly gentleman guided us to the lake shore, which was more than hundred meters from the highway.

As soon as we turned left on a *kaccha* track, we saw a murmuration of Rosy Starlings on a tree on the right and a lonely Hoopoe pecking the grassy ground for his breakfast. Proceeding further, after crossing a small *nala*, we came across some thorny bushes where Green Bee-eaters were hawking insects. Further up we came to a Y junction and as advised took the track going right, and immediately spotted a Brown Shrike on a bare tree.

We finally came to a canal-like structure and had to park the car there because of slushy ground. We started walking towards the lake, avoiding the slush. On the left was a Black Drongo, doing aerobatics to catch insects, and a lone Red-wattled Lapwing, sitting coolly on the ground watching and repeatedly saying 'did you do it'.

We finally made it to the shore: the lake had literally become an ocean and with hardly any bird life, except an Indian Cormorant sitting on a huge rock. Next to the canal and right

below, we could spot an Indian Moorhen and a Blyth's Reed Warbler foraging among the reeds. Our attention was now drawn towards some plantations with loud noise which turned out to be Large Grey Babblers and, below, a pair of Indian Robins trying to find food.

We nevertheless scanned the lake with our binocs – at the far end there was an island-like grassy patch on which we could see a Grey Heron, a Purple Heron and some Egrets. We now turned back, a little disappointed for not seeing any bird life in the lake.

While walking towards the car, we spotted a Golden Oriole and a Grey Bellied Cuckoo. We were about to board the car when a White Wagtail came and sat on the canal parapet, as if to bid us farewell.

We drove back to the Y junction and took the left track. Here on a wall were a House Crow, a Large-billed Crow and a Brahminy Starling – a rather strange combination. Further up, there was a small tree on which were quite a few Baya Weavers – all looked like juveniles – and there was no nests in sight. Next to the tree was a dilapidated building on which sat a male House Sparrow preening himself. We proceeded further on this trail and while driving spotted Yellow-billed Babblers, a Cattle Egret, some Peafowl and a White-throated Kingfisher. The track soon came to an end as it was inundated with the lake water. We therefore stopped and decided to explore the surroundings on foot.

On the left was a huge pond, with outcrops and aquatic vegetation. Here a pair of Spot-billed Ducks had made their home. Also spotted here some Coot and a lone White-breasted Waterhen. We were about to leave when came a Marsh Harrier, majestically surveying the area.

Now we went to the right towards the lake. Atop a large tree was sitting a Eurasian Collared Dove, and on an adjacent shrub

was a Long-tailed Shrike. We now climbed an embankment to have a clear view of the lake. On the far end we could discern through our binocs an Openbill and a Painted Stork as also a Black-headed Ibis and some Cormorants.

By now it was time to return, so we called it a day after having compiled a list of 53 species.

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Bird Humour

Umesh Mani



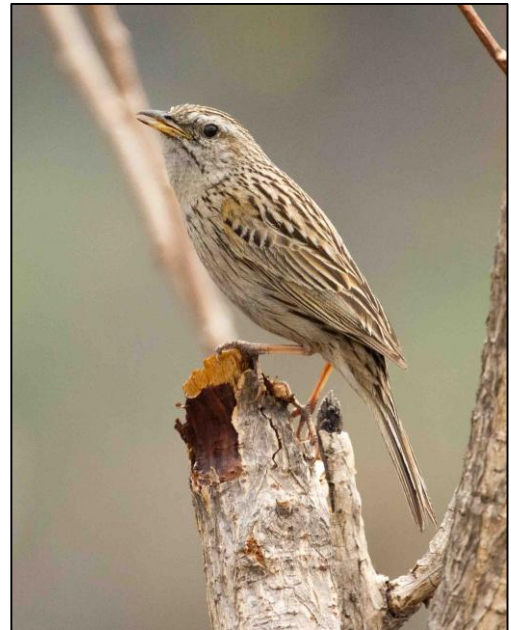
(Received on WhatsApp, August 28, 2024)

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Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Upland Pipit (*Anthus sylvanus*)



Upland Pipit (Kaladungi, Uttarakhand, May 09, 2024)

Order: Passeriformes
Family: Motacillidae
Genus: *Anthus*
Species: *A. sylvanus*
Size: 17 cm
IUCN Status: Least Concern

Description & distribution: The Upland Pipit is one of the larger pipits, and has a wide range, from Afghanistan east across Pakistan, India, Nepal, China and Hong Kong. It is, however, uncommon and sparsely distributed throughout most of its range. It is large-billed and quite bulky looking compared to other pipits, with an upright stance and heavy blackish-brown streaks on upperparts. The paler underparts can vary from warm buff (in fresh plumage) to cold and grey (in worn plumage), and show fine dark streaking. The supercilium is whitish and quite contrasting with the strongly-streaked crown, bill is short and broad, legs are pale, and the tail feathers are narrow and pointed. It has indistinct dark moustachial and malar stripes, and the iris is brown. The upper mandible is dark, while the lower is flesh-coloured with a dark tip. It may be confused with Richard's and Blyth's Pipits in overlapping areas, but it is more densely streaked and with a stouter and shorter bill. Juvenile birds have prominent pale buffish feather tips and edges above, giving it a scaly appearance, while the underparts are whiter with paler streaks. Only one sub-species is recognized.

Habitat & behaviour: The preferred habitat of the Upland Pipit is rocky and grassy slopes on hills and mountains, abandoned terrace cultivation, and open areas with grassland at altitudes above 500m, often strewn with rocks that act as song posts. It is resident in most parts of its range, and breeds in foothills and mountains, but descends during the winter. Its diet consists mainly of small invertebrates which it picks off the ground while moving along with creeping movements in horizontal posture. If disturbed, it adopts an upright posture and makes tail flicking movements. Its flight is the typical ballooning flight exhibited by other pipits, and the call is a sparrow-like chirp, while the song, uttered either from ground or in flight, is a repeated *seetyu-seetyu* or *tyu-see, tyu-see*, or a rather pleasant but monotonous *weeeee tch weeeee tch* or a drawn-out whistling *wichee wichee wichee*.

Nesting: The Upland Pipit breeds mainly between March and July. The nest is usually a cup of coarse grass lined with finer grass, and built under a rock or tuft of grass for concealment and protection. The usual clutch consists of 3-5 eggs. The Common Cuckoo is known to sometimes parasitize the nest of the Upland Pipit.

Local name: The Upland Pipit is known as '*Pahari dhanchidi*' in Hindi (a term also applied to other pipits), '*Pahari charchari*' in Punjabi, '*Pahari tulika*' in Bengali and '*Pahari chuiya*' in Nepali.

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For Private Circulation Only

Editors: Shanti Mani, Umesh Mani

Email: bsap.pitta@gmail.com

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For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.in. **E-group:** <http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders>. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)